



Overview of the Experts, Local Materials and Knowledge on Cultural Heritage and its Links to Sustainable Development in the Serbian Carpathian region

A) Intangible Cultural Heritage – Traditional Knowledge

Developed from experience gained over centuries and adapted to the local culture and environment, traditional knowledge is transmitted orally from generation to generation. It tends to be collectively owned and takes the form of stories, songs, folklore, proverbs, cultural values, beliefs, rituals, community laws, local language, and agricultural practices, including the development of plants species and animal breeds. Traditional knowledge is mainly of a practical nature, particularly in such fields as agriculture, fisheries, health, horticulture, and forestry.¹

NUË BUN ÐI VACA NUASTRĂ (Vlachs language)

NIJE DOBRO NAŠOJ KRAVI (Serbian language)

The circumstances are not good for our cow

When something goes in the wrong direction, or harm has already been done, but no one distinguishes it, or no one pays attention, people in the Serbian Carpathian region use this proverb.

It may not sound optimistic but this proverb has been chosen for the beginning of this document to express our concern about the protection and preservation of the enormous richness of cultural heritage in the Serbian Carpathian region. At the same time, the proverb shows the character of the local people - if it is not good for their cow, it is not good for them. The living conditions in the Carpathians are hard but locals always find strength and ways to sustain and develop themselves.

Numerous events, which have been organized annually in the Serbian Carpathian region, show to the public the expertise of local people in the field of culture and heritage. Traditional dances, songs, home-made food and drink, clothes and crafts, rituals and stories illustrate the connections between local people and nature and society. Thanks to some traditional habits, which are not so commonly practiced in everyday life nowadays, culture and heritage is still preserved. The motivation to present knowledge and traditions to the others strengthens co-operation in the region.

Although the life of local people in the Carpathians is based on nature, they recognize and respect diversity, and even if they are not familiar with concept, they act in a way which is sustainable development. A traditional activity called the 'Moba' is a gathering of local people in order for them to help each other in everyday actions - from collecting the crops and working in the fields, to organizing weddings and other celebrations. The Moba is a time for exchanging experiences, transferring knowledge to young people, learning and relaxation. The Moba is a lifestyle. There is no need to invite someone to Moba, because traditionally people in Carpathians pay attention to their neighbours, and when help is needed they help. Villages in the Carpathians are good examples of co-existence between

¹ Handbook on the Carpathian Convention, REC and EURAC, 2007

Serbs and Vlachs. Although these two groups have a different culture and traditions, through the ages, they found ways to share and learn from each other. On some points, traditions are mixed, but also large differences are still present. The Vlach population has their own language (unique for Serbia) and traditions, beliefs, and hospitality. Thus the Vlach culture in Serbia has been studied by numerous experts, mostly ethnologists. Along with others, the Vlachs celebrate the spirit of the forest, and have so called 'traditional medicine' which is based on collecting wild plants and fruits, conserving them and using them when needed.

Beliefs in mythical creatures, holy beings and demons are widespread in this area. They originate from the times before Christianity. The life cycle - birth, wedding and death - is accompanied by rituals, which are believed to secure a better life on Earth and a successful transition to the next world, the eternal world on the other side. One of the most unique customs for Vlachs living in this region is the *pomana*, organised on the first night after the funeral (*cara*), and then again seven days after funeral (*stamina*) and then a further forty days after. The basis of the *pomana* is bread-making. The most important breads are called the *trabujelje*, and represent gods and mythic creatures which guard the gates between two worlds. Sometimes bread is also made for the souls of living people. Locals respect nature, but at the same time they are afraid of the 'nature mood'. Therefore at Christmas and other religious holidays, locals make small breads, specially shaped and dedicated to animals, fields, crops and homes in order to please God and the mythic creatures that protect their environment.

Many songs and dances have a purpose to show respect to nature and teach the young generations how to live in harmony with nature. At the same time songs and dances have a social dimension, they help people to relax after hard work, and they celebrate history, local heroes, love and friendship.

The River Danube, spreading along the Carpathian Mountains, was and still is an inspiration and resource for locals. Inhabitants use the river but at the same time they respect and protect it. The 'Bucka' is an ancient way of fishing on the Danube. The Bucka is a special pot, made of wood or metal, around 50cm long. During years of research, it was discovered that the "bucka" is made corresponding to a model of a pot previously used by soldiers in this area. After finishing their meal, soldiers would wash the pot in the river, making a noise that would attract cat fish. Once the fish comes close, it was easier to catch. Although habits have changed a lot, still in the early mornings on the banks of the Danube the sound of the Bucka can be heard.

Food is a part of the cultural heritage of every nation. Cherishing their traditional ways of food preparation, the people in the Djerdap's villages base their diets on homemade cheese, buckwheat pie, dark bread, beans (*prebranac*), sour cabbage, Vlachs pancakes, salted pork meat (*salamura*) and other specialties. The dishes are served with traditional drinks: *rakija* (brandy), as well as teas prepared from domestic herbs.

Traditional clothes are colorful, made of comfortable fibres, with a lot of needlework details. The clothes vary from seasons, occasions, and are diverse for different generations.

B) Tangible forms of Cultural Heritage

According to Article 1 of the World Heritage Convention (WHC), the following shall be considered as cultural heritage: monuments, groups of buildings, sites. These are tangible forms of cultural heritage since they are physical artifacts left by preceding cultures and civilizations.²

² Handbook on Carpathian Convention, REC and EURAC, 2007

In 1970 a hydro power plant was built on Danube River in the Djerdap region. This huge construction caused the water level to rise, changing the environment and submerging many cultural and historical monuments. This negative human activity took them away forever, however, still many other tangible forms of cultural heritage remains in the region.

Handicrafts

On the slopes of mountains, in the Djerdap region traditional sheep breeding provides a good living for local villages. Wool clothing is still present and is seen commonly in local clothes. Hand-weaving, along with hand-spinning is a popular craft. Weavers use wooden looms to create tapestries and small rugs. Many wooden tools are made for work in the fields and in the house. In the Majdanpek Municipality silver jewelry is still a very popular handicraft. Majdan art and annual events, gather together numerous individuals specializing in this art.

Monuments and Buildings

On the wilder territory of the Serbian Carpathian region, numerous beautiful inherited constructions exist. They are all equally important for the local population. Some of the most visible are:

Bridges and fortresses: The Roman Emperors Tiberius, Claudius, Domitian and Trajan cut a strategic road through the Djerdap Canyon and built bridges and fortifications along it in the period of 1st-2nd century A.D., remains of which still stand today. The medieval fortresses which defended the entrance and passage through the Canyon, of which the most important are Golubac and Fetislam, dating from the Turkish period, also testify to the constant clashes of various cultures and civilizations in this region.

Houses: The old, traditional houses in the region are built from wood. Some of typical buildings can be found in villages. Kapetan Misin billet and Tenka's house in Donji Milanovac are examples of traditional houses of important inhabitants from the 19th Century. Kapetan Misin's billet was built as a two floor building, with a ground floor made of rock and a first floor made of wooden logs (bondruk), with an external stairway and a large porch. Tenka's house was built as a ground floor house made of wooden logs and base walls made of stone. Such old houses have better energy efficiency than most of the new buildings in the region.

Churches: Numerous churches exist in the region; almost every village has a church. They are important for local people. One of the most well known is Saint Nikola Church with a long history that coincides with the history of Donji Milanovac. It possesses valuable objects from the old Porec church: a copy of the gospel with enameled fittings, a silver cross from 1830, a small gospel, a silver chalice and four valuable icons from 15th and 18th Century. Recently the church received a cross from Jerusalem made from cedar wood from the Sinai Mountains.

Sites

The historical and archaeological features that characterize the area of the National Park Djerdap make it one of the Europe's most fascinating geographical destinations. During the past three decades, on the banks of the River Danube, from Golubac to Sip, some 80 archaeological sites (which represent 20,000 years of history of this area) have been thoroughly researched. The research focuses on 35 such sites, variously dating from the Prehistoric Period to the Middle Ages.

In the surroundings of Donji Milanovac the most important archeological site is Lepenski Vir. Lepenski Vir was a permanent abode of hunters, and a religious and artistic centre. It is the site to which the first monumental works of art of Central and South-Eastern Europe can be traced, as well as being recognised as the oldest location of organized social, economic and religious life in the Danube river

basin. The discovery of this site marked a new chapter in the study of European pre-history. Lepenski Vir is an impressive illustration of the link between man and nature, of the role and significance of the natural environment for husbandry and the organization of life and culture in general.

The Archeological site 'Okno' in Rudna Glava, is where in 1968, the experts of the Mining and Metallurgy Museum from Bor, and the Archeological Institute SANU from Belgrade, discovered the remains of a prehistoric mine dating back 6,000 years. According to the number and degree of preservation of the relics, this site is unique in the world. Due to its scientific value, it has been declared as a cultural object of exceptional importance.

The Spatial Plan of Djerdap National Park Djerdap includes the following recorded cultural objects under sunken locations:

Livadice, (antique fortress); Brnjica, (Roman castrum); Cezava, (Roman castrum); Cezava, (medieval necropolis); Saldum, (Roman and early Byzantine fortress); Zidinac, (late antiquity speculum); Kozica, (prehistoric settlements); Bosman, (early Byzantine fortress); Gospodjin Vir, (antique and medieval site); Manastir - Gospodjin Vir, (prehistoric, antique and medieval site); Padina, (Mesolithic and early Neolithic sites); Pesaca, (prehistoric settlement, antique fortress and medieval necropolis); Stubica, (early Neolithic settlement); Velike Livadice, (prehistoric, antique and medieval settlement); Male Livadice, (early iron age settlement and antique watchtower); Klisura, (bronze age settlement); Lepenski Vir, (Roman tower); Lepenski Vir, (prehistoric potkapina); Katarinine Livade, (bronze age settlement); Boljetin, (Roman and early Byzantine camp); Boljetin, (medieval settlement and necropolis); Vlasac, (Mesolithic settlement); Ravna, (Roman and early Byzantine fortress); Ravna, (medieval settlement and necropolis); Ribnica, (prehistoric and antique site, medieval settlement and necropolis); Donji Milanovac - Veliki Gradac, (Roman and early Byzantine fortress); Mrfaja, (complex of prehistoric sites around the river Porecka); Porecka Reka, (collecting center for supply of Roman troops in Djerdap); Porecka Reka, (medieval settlement and necropolis); Malo i Veliko Golubinje, (prehistoric, Roman-Byzantine site); Pecka Bara, (prehistoric, antique and medieval site); Hajducka Vodenica, (prehistoric necropolis); Hajducka Vodenica, (prehistoric settlement); Hajducka Vodenica, (late antiquity and early Byzantine fortress); Hajducka Vodenica, (medieval settlement and necropolis); Barace kod Trajanove Table, (prehistoric and antique settlement); Tekija, (Roman fortress - Transdierna); Sip, (late antiquity fortress); Kosovica, (Roman bridge); Roman Road through Djerdap gorge.

C) Overview of experts

Both individuals and institutions active in the field of culture and heritage in Serbian Carpathian region, directly and indirectly, help to preserve, promote and celebrate the cultural identity of the region.

Local Experts

Only local people, whose teachers were ancestors and neighbours, are true experts in traditional singing, dancing, food preparation, breeding domestic animals, growing fruits and vegetables in traditional ways and practicing handicrafts. Singers and players of traditional Vlachs music include Mileva Skoprdic, Mosu Milan Rasancanu, Nikola Petrovic, as well as Paun Es Durlic, whom local ethnologist call the "the last Orpheus of Balkans".

Almost every village has a society of women, a type of local club where women preserve local traditions. In the Debeli Lug village women work actively on promotion of cultural heritage, they participate at national events, fairs and exhibitions. Locals are active in the preservation and promotion of traditions, but they also work on the development of modern art which is environmental friendly and has the potential for promotion of sustainable development. The Gallery 'Man, Wood and Water' is one of the local attractions for tourists. The artist, who owns the gallery, collects the wood brought by water to the

banks of Danube and makes sculptures from it. Tourists who come to this gallery have an opportunity to taste local food and drinks, listen to local music and learn about the life in region.

The local institutions include the Museum of Majdanpek, Lepenski Vir Museum, Djerdap National Park Headquarters, "Djerdap" Archeological Museum in Kladovo, and various Cultural Centres where a number of professionals work on the protection and preservation of culture, traditions and natural heritage in the region. Non-governmental organizations from the region are also a very important element for preserving and promoting culture and traditions. The Society of Young Researchers of Bor has a group of ethnographic researchers. They present their results in publications, on meetings and congresses. Their activities connect biodiversity conservation with the traditions of local people.

The list of local experts is long, and the above mentioned examples are just to illustrate the diversity of resources concerning the Carpathian region of Serbia.

External experts

The Carpathian region has always been attractive for scientists and researchers of all kinds : archeologists, ethnologists, biologist and geologists etc. They have visited the region and undertake numerous investigations. Institutions are also active in the region : the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Serbia is supervising the activities of local institutions and in some cases allocates money for the conservation and promotion of cultural heritage. The Ministry has a list of all institutions, associations and organizations active in the field of culture and heritage in region. Experts from National Museum in Belgrade have numerous activities in region, mostly focused on the archeological sites. One of the positive examples of involvement of external experts is at the Centre for the Study of Cultural Development. The experts from this institution work on a project 'Horizons for Sustainable Development', aiming to develop cultural tourism in the region as a solution for the sustainable development of the local communities.

As already mentioned, this is an overview of experts, local materials and knowledge on cultural heritage, but it shows the richness and hopefully provides a good starting point for future actions.

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